



The Sarajevo Sentinel

A newsletter for American citizens living, working, and visiting Bosnia and Herzegovina

Produced by the Consular Section of U.S. Embassy Sarajevo

SPRING 2012

U.S. Embassy Sarajevo

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*For after-hour emergencies, please
call the Embassy switchboard.*

**For all telephone inquiries, please
call us Monday through Friday
between 3:30 and 4:30 p.m.**

American Citizen Services

Business Hours:

Monday through Friday from 2:00 to
3:30 p.m.;

Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:00
to 11:30 a.m.

**We can provide better service if you
make an appointment at*

[http://sarajevo.usembassy.gov/service.h
tml](http://sarajevo.usembassy.gov/service.html)

ACS e-mail: rws@state.gov

Non-Immigrant Visa Hours:

By appointment only.

Call Visa Information Service:

(387) 33 295 375

Immigrant Visa Hours:

By appointment only.

IVConsularSarajevo@state.gov

The Embassy will be closed on:

9 April - Catholic Easter Monday

1 May - Labor Day

2 May - Labor Day

28 May - Memorial Day

The 2012 Election Cycle Begins NOW



Be an active voter! Start thinking
about your participation in the U.S.
2012 elections today!

The Consular Section staff at
Embassy Sarajevo is ready to assist
with completing your Federal Post
Card Application (FPCA) - the form
you need to complete this year to
participate in the 2012 elections as
an overseas absentee voter. Our
purpose is to inform and educate
you about your voting rights, to
ensure you are able to exercise your
right to participate in elections for
federal offices (President, Vice
President, Senator, and
Representative), and to assist you
with voting in state or local
elections, if allowed by your state.

**New absentee voting laws are in
effect for the 2012 elections.** You
will no longer automatically receive
ballots based on a previous absentee
ballot request. All U.S. citizens
outside the United States who want
to vote by absentee ballot in the
2012 primary and general elections
must complete a new Federal Post
Card Application (FPCA) every year if
they wish to vote from abroad.

States are now required to send out
ballots 45 days before an election.
No matter what state you vote in,
you can now ask your local election
officials to provide your blank ballots
to you electronically (by email,
internet download, or fax,
depending on your state). You can
now also confirm your registration
and ballot delivery on-line. Be sure
to include your email address on the
form to take advantage of the
electronic ballot delivery option. This
is the fastest and most reliable way
to receive your ballot on time, and
we strongly recommend every
overseas voter take advantage of it.
Learn more at the Federal Voting
Assistance Program's (FVAP) website
www.FVAP.gov.

Beginning in January 2012,
presidential primaries were held in
the following states of New
Hampshire (Jan. 10) and South
Carolina (Jan. 21), and will be held in
Florida (Jan. 31), Missouri (Feb. 7),
Wisconsin (Feb. 21), Arizona (Feb.
28), and Michigan (Feb. 28). Other
states will follow throughout the
spring and summer. Voter
registration deadlines for primaries
are as early as Jan. 3, 2012.

Note: Participation in party
presidential caucuses by overseas
voters is not protected by federal
law and requires in-person
attendance in most cases. If the
party you are affiliated with selects
presidential nominees by caucus in
your state contact state party
officials for further information.

You can obtain a Federal Post Card
Application (FPCA) at FVAP's
[website](http://www.FVAP.gov). The FPCA is accepted by all

local election officials in all U.S. states and territories. It allows you to register to vote and request absentee ballots for all elections for federal offices (presidential and state primaries, run-off, special, and the November general elections) during the course of the year. An online wizard will help you complete the form. Depending on your state's voting requirements, you then either send in the FPCA electronically or mail it to your local election officials. To mail it, print out the completed FPCA and the (U.S.) postage-paid envelope containing the address of your local election officials. If you bring in your forms or ballots to us we will mail them back home for you without you having to pay for international mail. If it's easier for you to use Japan's postal system, be sure to affix sufficient postage and allow sufficient time for international mail delivery.

Voters can also drop off their ballots at your nearest Embassy/Consulate to be mailed out for you. Please be aware though you must make an appointment to drop off your ballot and that it will be sent through regular channels thus may take up to two weeks to reach its destination.

To drop off your ballot at the Embassy, please make an appointment through Notarial services.

Even if your state does not have a presidential primary in the early months of 2012, it is important that you submit a new Federal Post Card Application this and every January to receive all absentee ballots for which you are eligible. By applying early, you also allow enough time for election officials to contact you and resolve any questions or problems with your registration/ballot request.

Remember that your vote counts, and that many U.S. elections within the past 10 years have been decided

by a margin of victory of less than 0.1%. All states are required to count every absentee ballot as long as it's valid and reaches local election officials by the absentee ballot receipt deadline.

Be an Educated Voter. Check out the FVAP links page for helpful resources that will aid your research of candidates and issues. Non-partisan information about candidates, their voting records, and their positions on issues are widely available and easy to obtain via numerous websites such as [Project Smart Voter](#). You can also read national and hometown newspapers online, or search the Internet to locate articles and information. For information about election dates and deadlines, subscribe to FVAP's Voting Alerts (vote@fvap.gov). FVAP also shares Voting Alerts via [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



New IRS Form for Overseas Taxpayers

DRAFT FORM 8938, STATEMENT OF FOREIGN FINANCIAL ASSETS			
Form 8938	Statement of Foreign Financial Assets	OMB No. 1545-0047	Page 1 of 1
Use only if you are required to file this form with your federal income tax return.	Use only if you are required to file this form with your federal income tax return.	Use only if you are required to file this form with your federal income tax return.	Use only if you are required to file this form with your federal income tax return.
<p>Part I. Information about the filer.</p> <p>Name of filer (print or type): _____</p> <p>Address of filer (print or type): _____</p> <p>City, state, and ZIP code: _____</p> <p>Country: _____</p> <p>Relationship to the taxpayer (print or type): _____</p> <p>Signature of filer: _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p>			
<p>Part II. Information about the financial institution.</p> <p>Name of financial institution: _____</p> <p>Address of financial institution: _____</p> <p>City, state, and ZIP code: _____</p> <p>Country: _____</p> <p>Account number: _____</p> <p>Branch name: _____</p> <p>Branch address: _____</p> <p>Branch city, state, and ZIP code: _____</p> <p>Branch country: _____</p>			
<p>Part III. Information about the asset.</p> <p>Name of asset: _____</p> <p>Address of asset: _____</p> <p>City, state, and ZIP code: _____</p> <p>Country: _____</p> <p>Account number: _____</p> <p>Branch name: _____</p> <p>Branch address: _____</p> <p>Branch city, state, and ZIP code: _____</p> <p>Branch country: _____</p>			

Do you have more than \$50,000? If so, you might need file the new Form 8938.

Under the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA), U.S. taxpayers with specified foreign financial assets that exceed certain thresholds must report those assets to the IRS using Form 8938.

You can find Form 8938 [online here](#) along with the instructions, regulations, and other information to help you determine if you are required to file this form.

There is no Internal Revenue Service (IRS) representative in Sarajevo, however, the IRS has a significant amount of information available online at the [IRS web site](#) for U.S. citizens abroad, including all needed forms. We recommend that you obtain your tax forms online. The consular staff in Sarajevo is not able to assist you with your tax questions, or help you determine which IRS forms you may need to file.

Contacting the IRS

Telephone Services (Available 24 hours):

- Individuals: 1-800-829-1040
- Businesses: 1-800-829-4933

The Philadelphia Service Center services all overseas filers, including military personnel stationed abroad. When responding to a specific bill or notice use the contact information provided on the bill or notice.

Philadelphia Service Center:

Customer Service Phone: 1-215-516-2000

Hours: Mon-Fri 6:00 am - 11:00 pm

Customer Service Fax: 1-215-516-2555/3256

Fax for Transcripts of Returns: 1-215-516-2931/1311/1322

Refund Inquiries: 1-800-829-1954

TeleTax: 1-800-829-4477 -
Available 24 hours

DON'T LET YOUR PASSPORT EXPIRE!

If you are planning on traveling during this season, please check the validity of your passport. Passports take around TWO WEEKS to arrive at post.

Please make an appointment online.

<http://sarajevo.usembassy.gov/service.html>

Have a question about what we do?
Please email us at rws@state.gov
and you may see your question in the next issue of the Sarajevo Sentinel.

Q&A

Q: I'm planning on marrying a local national. What documents do I need from the Embassy?

A: The Consular Section will provide you with:

- A certified copy of your U.S. passport (equivalent to the BiH Certificate of citizenship)
- A notarized affidavit where you will attest that you are free to marry

- Certificate of absence of legal impediments to marriage

Fees

- Marriage affidavit: \$50
- Certified copy of passport: US \$50
- Certificate of absence of legal impediments to marriage: \$50
- Total: US \$150, payable in US dollars or the equivalent in KM

Additional Documents for the BiH Authorities

1. A certified copy of your birth certificate, certified by an Apostille." Apostille certification is obtained from officials in the state that issued the birth certificate. The Consular Section can give you the name and address of the relevant official in your state. The copy of the birth certificate will be retained by Bosnian authorities.
2. Divorce decree, if applicable. It has to be certified by an apostille in the same manner as above.
3. Your birth certificate, passport, and divorce decree (if applicable) must also be translated by a sworn court interpreter. The Consular Section can give you the list of sworn court interpreters for English. The interpreter will affix his/her official seal on the translated copy. The translated copy and the

original document must then be taken to the District Court responsible for the area in which you wish to marry. The Court will affix its seal.

4. Your birth certificate, proof you are free to marry and Certificate of absence of legal impediments to marriage also must be taken to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sarajevo (Musala St. No. 2) for certification.

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)



The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country.

STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency.

STEP also allows Americans residing abroad to get routine information from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Please click [here](https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/) to enroll.
<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT)

Attention Americans in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Are you interested in becoming a diplomat? To be eligible for the Foreign Service, the U.S. Department of State requires that all applicants be:

- U.S. citizens on the date they submit their registration package
- At least 20 years old and no older than 59 years of age on the day you submit your registration
- At least 21 years old and not yet 60 on the day you are appointed as a Foreign Service Officer (FSO)
- Available for worldwide assignments, including Washington, D.C.

Even though you are not required to know a foreign language to become an FSO, proficiency in one or more languages will enhance your competitiveness for selection.

If you are a capable, healthy and dedicated candidate who is prepared to step up to the challenges facing our country and the world, taking the Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) is the first step towards becoming an FSO.

The Foreign Service Officer Test will be offered in Sarajevo on **Tuesday, June 5, 2012.**

Registration is open now, and seat scheduling begins on **April 30, 2012.** The registration deadline is **May 21, 2012** – make sure to register early so that you get a seat! To find out more and register to take the test, click [here](#).

<http://careers.state.gov/officer/selection-process>